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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Sixty-sixth session

Summary record of the 1486th meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Thursday, 23 February 2017, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Ms. Leinarte

Contents

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined seventh to ninth periodic reports of Rwanda (CEDAW/C/RWA/7-9; CEDAW/C/RWA/Q/7-9 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chair, the delegation of Rwanda took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Nyirasafari** (Rwanda), introducing the State party's combined seventh to ninth periodic reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/C/RWA/7-9), said that the principle of equality was one of the fundamental principles enshrined in the Constitution of Rwanda. The Government's commitment to building a society based on the rule of law, pluralism and gender equality had been reflected in the constitutional amendments made in 2015. In addition, a 30 per cent gender quota for decision-making roles had been introduced and gender-based discrimination prohibited. The Government was committed to upholding the fundamental rights established in the Convention and had pledged to support women and girls in the full enjoyment of their fundamental rights, promote women's participation in the sustainable development of their society and prevent all forms of gender-based violence. Rwanda recognized the important role played by women in all areas of society and in the socioeconomic development of the country. Moreover, President Paul Kagame was among the 10 Heads of State to become a champion of gender equality under the "HeForShe" initiative of UN-Women.

3. A number of legislative measures had been implemented in the years since the consideration of the country's previous periodic report. A series of domestic laws had been enacted to prevent, prohibit and prosecute discrimination on the basis of gender in all spheres of life. In addition, laws on the status of individuals and the family, and on matrimonial property, gifts and succession rights, had been passed in 2016. Under the Constitution, as amended in 2015, only the Constitution itself and organic laws provided for under the Constitution took precedence over international conventions ratified by Rwanda.

4. Turning to the national machinery for the promotion of women, she said that an institutional framework for gender issues had been established with responsibility for coordinating and implementing all measures aimed at helping families and, in particular, women. That framework comprised: the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, which was charged with formulating, coordinating and disseminating gender policy; the National Women's Council, a grass-roots forum advocating for gender equality and women's rights, encouraging women's participation in development activities and providing women with capacity-building and training opportunities; the Gender Monitoring Office, tasked with performing follow-up and evaluation of gender policy, ensuring that gender mainstreaming was integrated into all areas of national life and monitoring the implementation of regional and international conventions ratified by Rwanda; and, lastly, a national technical working group on gender, which comprised representatives from State agencies, NGOs and the private sector and was aimed at supporting measures to promote gender equality.

5. Twelve years of free, compulsory education was provided in order to ensure that girls and boys completed primary and secondary school. In addition, new schools, classrooms and girls-only sanitation facilities had been built and school meals provided. Scholarships had also been awarded to top female students to encourage them to enter higher education. The Government had furthermore pledged to triple the number of girls enrolled in vocational and technical training. Indeed, women's enrolment rate in vocational and technical training had increased from 21 per cent in 2007 to 41.8 per cent in 2015. Nine vocational training centres had been created and equipped for the purposes of training women and girls, and women graduates received support for running cooperatives and were provided with access to basic tools and credit.

6. With a view to changing attitudes and challenging stereotypes about the roles of men and women, several policies and strategies had been implemented by the Government

aimed at raising awareness of issues relating to gender equality, including the National Gender Policy and National Policy against Gender-based Violence. The Government had also set up a network of gender violence and health centres, known as Isange "one-stop" centres, which were based in district hospitals and provided medical services, psychosocial support and legal aid to victims. There were plans to build another 17 such centres in addition to the 28 already in operation. Amendments to the Criminal Code and to a law on preventing gender-based violence were under consideration, and an anti-trafficking bill was in the pipeline. In that regard, a study was planned to identify the true scale and underlying causes of trafficking in persons, which would guide government strategies and activities with a view to eradicating it.

7. Following the adoption of a national policy to promote women's participation in decision-making roles and the introduction of a gender quota for members of Parliament, women now occupied 64 per cent of seats in the Chamber of Deputies and represented 41 per cent of the Cabinet of Ministers, 46 per cent of the judiciary and 50 per cent of provincial governors. The National Women's Council also organized relevant training as a means of encouraging women candidates to stand in parliamentary elections.

8. In the area of employment, legislation had been enacted in 2016 to provide women with three months' paid maternity leave. The proportion of women employed in non-agricultural work had increased noticeably since 2000, and more than a quarter of registered companies were owned by women. Steps had also been taken to increase women's financial independence and participation in economic life. By way of example, thanks to a national employment strategy women had the opportunity to learn a trade and start income-generation projects. An organic law governing land management introduced in 2013 granted women the same land rights as men and facilitated women's access to credit.

9. Many challenges were still to be overcome in Rwanda, not least the persistent negative cultural and patriarchal attitudes that hindered women's full participation in socioeconomic life and women's low level of skills and employability, which limited their employment opportunities and prevented them from occupying decision-making roles. The Government was facing those challenges head-on, however, by introducing educational programmes and awareness-raising campaigns aimed at men with a view to inspiring them to become agents of change, encouraging girls to learn a trade or undertake training in science and technology and strengthening and expanding training for women to enable them to develop and manage income-generating projects.

Articles 1 to 6

10. **Ms. Patten**, commending the State party for its adoption of recent laws improving the status of women in areas such as the family, matrimony and succession rights, said that she wished to know what action, if any, had been taken or was envisaged to amend or repeal the country's remaining discriminatory laws. She was concerned that some national laws, including ones that were discriminatory in nature, took precedence over the Convention. It would be useful to have an account of the article of the Constitution that stipulated the order of priority of laws, including international agreements such as the Convention. She wished to know whether that article applied to all international treaties to which Rwanda was a party and whether there had been any cases in which the courts had had to rule on a conflict between the domestic legislation and the Convention.

11. She asked how many cases of discrimination had been prosecuted and convictions obtained under the Criminal Code since 2012. She also would like to know whether the Constitution contained an explicit definition of discrimination against women, including direct and indirect discrimination, in line with article 1 of the Convention, and, if not, how the judiciary was interpreting cases of discrimination against women. It would also be useful to have data on the number of cases of discrimination that had been filed by women complainants. In that connection, she also wished to know whether there were plans to review the legal aid policy, in particular to broaden the eligibility criteria for legal aid and reduce legal costs for women on low incomes.

12. She would like to know whether there were plans to implement a second national action plan on the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325

(2000) on women and peace and security, since the first had expired in 2012, and, if so, whether technical assistance had been sought in that regard. Lastly, recalling the most recent concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee (CCPR/C/RWA/CO/4) and the findings of a 2010 United Nations mapping exercise documenting the most serious violations of human rights and international law committed within the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, she wished to know what measures had been taken by the Government to investigate all allegations of human rights violations reportedly committed by the Rwandan Patriotic Front in 1994.

13. **Ms. Nyirasafari** (Rwanda) said that, following the enactment of new laws establishing equality in areas such as the family, matrimony and succession rights, no discriminatory provisions remained in the legislation governing the family. As to the hierarchy of laws under the legal system of Rwanda, the organic laws established under the Constitution were considered to be on an equal footing with the Constitution itself and, as such, took precedence over all international conventions to which Rwanda was a party. A definition of discrimination existed and all forms of discrimination, whether direct or indirect, were prohibited under the Constitution and punishable under article 136 of the Criminal Code. A number of cases had come before the courts and penalties had been imposed for acts of discrimination, including on the basis of ethnicity and gender. Women and men had the same right of access to justice, without any discrimination. Legal aid was available to anyone who did not otherwise have the means to pay for a lawyer, and women and children were given priority in terms of access to legal assistance.

14. The Government rejected allegations that Rwandan forces had committed offences in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There had, however, been prosecutions for isolated cases in which soldiers had been accused of committing human rights violations after the genocide.

15. **Ms. Patten** said that, notwithstanding the various legislative measures introduced, discriminatory provisions remained. For example, under the Criminal Code, more lenient penalties were applied to marital rape than to other forms of rape. She wished to know whether a review of all legislation had been conducted to ensure that it conformed with the Convention, especially in view of the precedence given to constitutional provisions over the Convention, and whether gender-impact assessments had been carried out to pinpoint any legal provisions that were directly or indirectly discriminatory. It would also be helpful to see the text of the constitutional provision that contained a definition of discrimination against women. In that connection, she asked how many cases of gender-based discrimination had so far been brought in the State party and whether the Convention could be invoked by the courts. As to legal aid, the Committee had received reports that it was only available to the poor, people with disabilities or children. If that was the case, were there any plans to review the legal aid policy? Regarding refugees, she wondered what measures had been taken to prevent violence against women in refugee camps, including by enhancing the presence of law enforcement officers, particularly women officers, who had been trained to deal with victims of sexual violence.

16. **Ms. Nyirasafari** (Rwanda) said that the Criminal Code was still in the process of being reviewed, including in relation to provisions on gender-based discrimination and on marital rape. A number of proposals had been put forward, and civil society organizations and other stakeholders had also been consulted. Her Government had made an assessment of the laws that were thought to contain discriminatory aspects had been drawn up with a view to amending or repealing them, including laws governing personal rights and the family, which were no longer discriminatory in nature. The Gender Monitoring Office was tasked with carrying out gender impact assessments which were used as the basis for developing or modifying policies.

17. The Convention formed part of the country's legal framework and, thus, could be invoked during court proceedings. The legal aid policy aimed to help the most vulnerable sections of society to have access to justice. It therefore covered people living in poverty, of which there were more women than men.

18. A great deal had been done to help and protect refugees, and a policy was being drafted to take into account the gender dimension in situations in which there were large

refugee flows. Awareness-raising campaigns were conducted for refugees regarding gender-based violence and a hotline had been set up to enable victims to report incidents. The camps were also regularly visited by the local authorities, which had not found a high incidence of violence against women. Nevertheless, a health centre had been established in one camp where there were plans to establish a one-stop centre for victims of gender-based violence.

19. **Ms. Gabr** said that she wished to commend the State party for the progress it had made in recent years in the area of women's rights, in particular regarding women's participation in political life. She asked how the periodic report had been drafted and to what extent civil society organizations had been involved in that process, whether the report had been presented to the Cabinet of Ministers and how the State party planned to follow up on the Committee's forthcoming concluding observations. She would welcome information on how the activities of the national machinery for the advancement of women that was referred to in the opening statement were harmonized and coordinated. She would also be interested to know who bore overall responsibility for ensuring that the Convention and the Committee's general recommendations were implemented. In a similar vein, she wondered who was responsible for developing plans and strategies aimed at overcoming the challenges the country still faced. Lastly, referring to the national technical working group on gender, which worked with civil society and NGOs, she asked whether government ministries and members of Parliament also formed part of or worked with that working group.

20. **Ms. Bethel**, referring to article 4 of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 on temporary special measures, said that she was pleased that the gender quotas to increase women's representation in the parliament and in decision-making posts had been successful. There were now high expectations for what the State party could achieve in other areas. She was concerned, however, that women remained underrepresented in local public administration and in senior management in the private sector. She wished to know what special measures had been introduced by women members of Parliament, in particular to ensure that vulnerable groups of women were able to overcome barriers to equality, such as illiteracy. She asked what temporary special measures had been taken or were envisaged to increase women's representation in decision-making bodies at the local level, eliminate the disadvantages faced by vulnerable groups of women, such as rural women, widows, conflict-affected women and girls and women with disabilities, and strengthen women's participation in economic life. She also wished to know what progress had been made in ensuring that women from historically marginalized groups, such as the Batwa community, were able to exercise their rights, whether any temporary special measures other than legislative initiatives had been used to boost women's representation in the private sector and academia and how efforts to increase the participation of girls in science, technology and vocational subjects were being monitored and assessed.

21. **Ms. Umurungi** (Rwanda) said that periodic reports were drafted by the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion. A task force overseen by the Ministry of Justice comprising representatives of State institutions and civil society organizations oversaw the process and held meetings to discuss and evaluate the content of the draft report. At the final stage of the process, the report was sent to the Cabinet of Ministers for approval before being submitted for consideration of the treaty body in question.

22. **Ms. Nyirasafari** (Rwanda) said that the Committee's forthcoming concluding observations would be shared with all stakeholders and widely disseminated, including to the public. The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion was responsible for formulating and coordinating the gender policies that were carried out and monitored by the various entities of the machinery for the advancement of women and for proposing new legislation. The Women Parliamentarians Forum was also a key partner in that process.

23. The Government was aware that women's representation remained low at the local level, and awareness-raising activities were being undertaken in conjunction with the gender machinery and with civil society with a view to encouraging more women to run for local public office. Breaking through long-standing cultural barriers and improving the education of women and girls were key to the achievement of that goal. For that reason, the

17-03129

Government had emphasized the need to recruit men as agents of change as well as to inspire women and girls to enrol in vocational and higher education. As to vulnerable groups of women, including those with disabilities or living in rural areas, they were encouraged to join local cooperatives and to take on leadership roles. The "Vision 2020 Umurenge" programme also offered employment services for rural women and access to interest-free credit, thereby enabling women to start their own income-generation projects.

24. Admittedly, women remained underrepresented in the private sector. However, measures were being taken and a related strategy, which integrated a gender perspective, was being devised. It was hoped that, once adopted, it would help more women to enter the business world. Awareness-raising activities were also being undertaken to promote higher and vocational education for girls, and the proportion of girls pursuing a vocational education had noticeably increased.

25. **Ms. Bethel** said that she would be interested to know what specific measures and bills had been put forward by women members of Parliament, in particular with regard to gender equality.

26. **Ms. Nyirasafari** (Rwanda) said that the law on preventing gender-based violence and the legislation regarding paid maternity leave had both originated from the Women Parliamentarians Forum.

27. **Ms. Acar** said that the differences between the punishments imposed for marital rape and other forms of rape under the law sent a poor signal to Rwandan society, which was already influenced by patriarchal values. She would appreciate information on the time frame for the review of laws governing rape and the expected outcomes of any such reviews. Patriarchal attitudes also encouraged acceptance of violence against women, even among young men, and prevented women from reporting it. She asked how the Government encouraged women to report such violence, inclu...ng through campaigns, the media and changes to school curricula, whether the hotline set up to receive complaints of violence operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week and was accessible to all women, including those in rural areas, and what types of calls it received. She would also welcome information on the types of cases addressed by the Isange "one-stop" centres and the support provided to victims there. She asked when a national system that would harmonize the collection of data o gender-based violence would be established, particularly in order to collect information on the relationship between victims and perpetrators, and what gender sensitivity training was provided for professionals who worked with victims.

28. **Ms. Gabr** said that she would welcome information on the bill on trafficking in persons, including who had introduced it and how it was progressing, and on the action plan in place to tackle the phenomenon. There were reports that further efforts were needed in that regard and that Burundians living in refugee camps in the country were particularly vulnerable to exploitation and trafficking. She asked how judicial and law enforcement officials were trained to deal with cases of trafficking. She wished to know whether the Government planned to amend the provisions of the Criminal Code that punished prostitutes and their clients equally and how women who wished to leave prostitution were retrained and helped to reintegrate into society.

29. **Ms. Nyirasafari** (Rwanda) said that the recognition of marital rape in the Criminal Code was an achievement given the objections voiced in some quarters. The fact that it was punished less severely than other forms of rape would be examined as part of the upcoming review of the Code, and patriarchal attitudes within society were being studied. However, those attitudes were not widespread and were now being changed through clubs organized by schools to teach boys about gender equality and respect for the rights of all. There were campaigns and initiatives to encourage women to report marital rape, including discussion of the topic during monthly village meetings, during which men were informed that it was a crime punishable by law. A month-long awareness-raising campaign on the role of women in society was planned for March 2017 and would address gender-based violence.

30. The hotline for victims of gender-based violence was free of charge and open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Assistance for victims included education services, income-generating projects and housing, although increased financial and other resources were required to improve the work to help them and their families, particularly given that

they were often stigmatized. While the country's different institutions currently collected their own data, a data-collection system that would make that information accessible via a central database was being devised.

31. Professionals who came into direct contact with victims of gender-based violence received training, and staff at the Isange "one-stop" centres, and doctors received training tailored to their roles. The Ministry of Justice legal aid offices (*Maisons d'Accès à la Justice*) employed a staff member responsible for addressing the issue, and there was a specialized gender-based violence department within the public prosecutor's office.

32. The bill on trafficking had been drafted while taking the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, into account given the international nature of the crime. The Gender Monitoring Office was looking closely at the phenomenon, and victims were identified through cooperation between the police, the public prosecutor's office and the Immigration Office, although it was true that few victims had been identified. Burundian refugees were given information on such trafficking, and potential perpetrators were detected thanks to the coordinated efforts of international law enforcement bodies and the Immigration Office.

33. **Mr. Ngarambe** (Rwanda) said that the phenomenon of domestic violence was disappearing thanks to sweeping reforms to women's legal status, which had granted them the right to enter into contracts and ensured that assets were shared equally between spouses and that inheritance was split equally between sons and daughters. Therefore, while women had been afraid to leave violent husbands in the past, because to do so would have led to destitution and the loss of custody of their children, they were now empowered to report violence committed against them and escape it.

34. **Ms. Gabr** said that she did not agree that domestic violence was disappearing; in fact, a third of women in Rwanda had experienced it. Particular attention should therefore be paid to the phenomenon. She asked whether the law that punished women who refused to testify against their husbands would be amended. She wished to know whether the country had received technical assistance from the United Nations or other international bodies in order to reduce trafficking.

35. **Ms. Acar** said that the State's obligation to protect a woman's rights did not cease when she married; therefore, marital rape could not be considered a lesser crime than other forms of rape. Given that crimes against family members were generally seen as aggravated crimes, she asked why rape was an exception. The Criminal Code should therefore be amended, particularly the provision that punished women for failing to testify, which often dissuaded them from reporting marital rape.

36. **Ms. Nyirasafari** (Rwanda) said that a study into the causes of trafficking was planned, and its results would be used to formulate an action plan. The punishment of prostitutes and their clients, and of women who did not testify in cases of marital rape, should be examined as part of the review of the Criminal Code.

Articles 7 to 9

37. **Ms. Bethel** said that she would welcome information on women's leadership and representation in trade unions, chambers of commerce, boards of public and private companies, employers' organizations, agriculture cooperatives and professional associations and on the social and cultural impediments to women's representation and the measures to increase it in those areas. The Committee had received reports that women with disabilities did not benefit from specific measures to increase their representation in public and political life, and she asked what temporary special measures had been adopted to integrate women from vulnerable groups into public and political life at the national and local levels.

38. She invited the delegation to provide details of the gender mainstreaming strategies in place in local government and the private sector to increase women's participation, including how those strategies were sustained, and of the deadlines and mechanisms in place to monitor and assess their implementation. Lastly, she wished to know what

education and training opportunities were open to women to enable them to develop their careers in the foreign service and in regional and international bodies.

39. **Ms. Nyirasafari** (Rwanda) said that one seat in Parliament was reserved for persons with disabilities, and a woman could be elected to that position. The Constitution provided for a minimum quota for women in decision-making roles and in the foreign service which must be respected by appointing authorities. That quota was monitored by the Gender Monitoring Office and the National Commission for Human Rights.

40. **Ms. Bethel** said that she would welcome information on the measures adopted to promote the representation of all vulnerable women, not only those with disabilities.

41. **Ms. Umurungi** (Rwanda) said that while there were no specific measures for women with disabilities, they benefited from measures to protect vulnerable women in general. Female members of Rwandan peacekeeping forces deployed overseas were trained in gender-based violence in accordance with the Kigali Declaration on Peace, Gender and Development.

42. **Mr. Ngarambe** (Rwanda) said that a large number of Rwandan ambassadors were women. The authorities that appointed ambassadors and diplomats, who were drawn principally from the civil service, endeavoured to maintain a gender balance. Positive discrimination measures for women's recruitment to the civil service meant that there was a good number of female candidates for diplomatic roles. Once women were accepted to the civil service, they were afforded the same development opportunities as their male colleagues.

Articles 10 to 14

43. **Ms. Gbedemah** said that, while the State party's commitment to improving girls' education was commendable, their educational performance remained below desirable levels, with, for example, many dropping out as a result of pregnancy. Noting that measures had been adopted to punish the men responsible for pregnancies among girls, she would welcome information on the profile and number of victims, perpetrators and convictions. It was not clear whether guidelines on sexual harassment in schools had been established and how the outcomes of the current study on gender-based violence in schools would be used to prevent the phenomenon. Furthermore, she wished to know why girls who had children were required to wait one year after giving birth before resuming their education; they should be permitted to return to school as soon as they were ready to do so.

44. The number of female teachers had not risen sufficiently, and the measures listed in the State party's replies to the list of issues failed to address the problem specifically. Although it was commendable that the number of female students attending private higher education institutions had increased, those institutions were normally more expensive than their public counterparts. She asked whether the implications of those higher costs had been studied.

45. She invited the delegation to provide specific figures relating to the increase in technical and professional training, in addition to the percentages already provided, and information on the take-up rate among women and the subjects that they studied. She would also welcome information on the number of girls receiving an education in refugee camps, whether sex education and peace education was provided there and what measures were in place to ensure that refugee girls could go on to secondary education establishments outside the camps. Lastly, in the light of statistics suggesting that girls with disabilities were disadvantaged in the State party, she asked what measures were in place to ensure that inclusive education was incorporated throughout teacher training and whether the girls' education policy cited in the report contained provisions for girls with disabilities.

46. **Ms. Arocha Domínguez** said that analysis of the information provided in the periodic report suggested that women were overrepresented in low-paid jobs that required few qualifications and in the informal sector. She would welcome updated data on how women's representation in different areas of employment had changed since the submission of the report.

47. She asked what qualitative improvements to women's employment had been seen since the adoption of law No. 13/2009, particularly with regard to female domestic workers, many of whom were aged under 16 and vulnerable to exploitation and sexual abuse. She wished to know what special measures had been adopted in response to the recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child in that regard and how rights violations in the domestic work sector were detected.

48. She asked how many complaints relating to employment matters had been lodged by women with the Office of the Ombudsman. The Committee had been informed of concerns surrounding the inclusion of vulnerable women in the labour market, for example former female combatants. She asked whether there were specific programmes to train those women and to take advantage of their skills and how the Government prevented them from stigmatization and discrimination. She asked what employment opportunities were available for Twa women, female refugees and asylum seekers and how the National Employment Programme "Free Market" initiative referred to in the replies to the list of issues (CEDAW/C/TWA/Q/7-9/Add.1, para. 66) had improved the lives of women street vendors.

49. **Ms. Chalal** said that, despite progress in the area of health, the Committee remained concerned by the country's legislation on abortion, which was legal only in cases of rape, forced marriage, incest and when the life of the woman or child was at risk. Additionally, even women who fell within those categories faced administrative and cultural barriers when attempting to exercise their right to abortion. She asked whether the State party planned to remove the requirement for two doctors to agree that an abortion was necessary when the health of the woman or child was at risk, for a judge to permit abortion in cases of rape, forced marriage and incest and for women to report rape within 72 hours if they wished to access abortion services. The Committee had been informed that a quarter of the women in prison were there because they had undergone illegal abortions, and she asked whether they would be pardoned and released. She wished to know how the public's awareness of their rights to abortion had been raised, including among medical professionals, and whether the review of the Criminal Code would include the provisions on abortion.

50. There were very high rates of early pregnancy in refugee camps, and she wished to know whether programmes on sexual and reproductive health, including programmes to prevent HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections, and health-care facilities staffed by qualified personnel were available in the camps. She asked what measures were planned to improve access to health services for women and older persons in rural areas and whether there were specific health programmes for Twa women and girls living in those areas, who often suffered discrimination.

51. She wished to know whether mental health-care units existed throughout the country, and she invited the delegation to provide data on the mental health cases that they treated, disaggregated by sex. It would also be interesting to learn whether specialized care and information on family planning were provided to women and girls with disabilities, particularly in rural areas. She would appreciate information on the causes of the high rate of cervical cancer in the country and efforts to ensure that it was diagnosed at an early stage. Lastly, she would welcome information on the measures introduced through the law on reproductive health promulgated in 2016.

52. **Ms. Nyirasafari** (Rwanda) said that girls' achievement at primary and secondary education was improving, and they obtained better examination results than boys at the secondary level. Dropout rates among girls were addressed by educating families on the importance of sending children of both sexes to school, building extra classrooms and providing sanitation facilities for girls. The men responsible for early pregnancies were normally known to their victims. The year-long period that school-age mothers must wait before re-entering education was intended to allow them to recover from the birth. Nevertheless, that provision should be reviewed. The low numbers of women in leadership positions in the education sector were owing to the fact that university studies were a prerequisite for such roles; it was hoped that, as increasing numbers of women attended university, more female candidates would apply. While children with serious disabilities

were educated in specialist schools, those with more minor disabilities could study in the mainstream education system.

53. Campaigns on a range of matters, including peace and sexual health, were organized in refugee camps. One of the camps benefited from a health centre where women could access reproductive health-care and other services. Although it was true that many women were in low-paid employment, there were also many who occupied important positions. Girls under the age of 18 were prohibited from being employed in paid domestic work and the Ministry of Public Service and Labour was examining how the sector could be regulated.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.